



EXHIBIT 1
DATE 1-29-07
HB 237

Ladies and Gentleman:

It is with great enthusiasm that I write to endorse HB 237 as introduced by Representative Mike Phillips. HB 237 aims to increase the amount of renewable energy procured by public utilities to 20 percent of retail sales by January 1, 2020. The bill further extends this requirement to 25 percent by 2025.

I don't think I have to remind anyone here about the dangers facing our planet due to climate change. Our own Governor Schweitzer has embraced energy independence and decreasing greenhouse gases. Renewable energy development is another strong tool we have to fight the increasing levels of greenhouse gases and to put us down a path to energy independence.

Promoting renewable energy development will not only help the environment, it is a great economic boost. In Texas, for instance, the wind energy development in rural West Texas is providing the tax base and supporting manufacturing jobs statewide. The alternative energy production in Texas alone is creating 9,364 person-years of work. It is an area where manufacturing, construction, and the environment can come together to not only decrease our dependence on foreign oil, but give a much needed boost to our domestic work force.

Contrary to what many critics claim, renewable energy is not more expensive than using fossil fuels. For one, many try to ignore the massive subsidies that are given to the fossil fuel industry, up to \$300 billion a year globally. Not to mention the additional cost to society necessary to repair the environmental and health damage from the use of fossil fuels.

Montana's law currently requires that public utilities procure a minimum of 5 percent of its retail electricity sales from renewable energy beginning in 2008. This then increases to 10 percent in 2010 and to 15 percent in 2015. Representative Phillips' bill would continue this trend, eventually increasing the amount of renewable energy to 25 percent; a fourth of the total electricity sold in the state would come from renewable energy.

There is a strong push in the states for increasing renewable energy use: Colorado is looking to double their requirement to 20 percent, Minnesota is looking to make their voluntary standard mandatory and aims for 25 percent by 2020. With Representative Phillips' bill, Montana will be one of the leaders in the country on promoting the use of renewable energy.

I wholeheartedly endorse Representative Phillips' bill to increase the amount of renewable energy used to 25 percent by 2025. I applaud Representative Phillips' vision and initiative.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Steve Doherty

Co-Char of the Progressive States Network and Former Montana Senate Minority Leader